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American Historical Society
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By D. B. Wa*

EULOGIUM
ON
MARCUS AURELIUS.

Antoine Léonard

BY THOMAS,

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.



NEWYORK,
PRINTED FOR BERNARD DORNIN;
BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER.

1808.

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TO
THOMAS JEFFERSON,

THE MARCUS AURELIUS OF THE UNITED STATES,

This translation is respectfully inscribed,

By his most obedient
and very humble servant,
D. B. WARDEN.

Paris, 1 December, 1807.

1847

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« I could wish » says La Harpe, in his *Literary Correspondence*, « that it were in my power often
« to announce works equal to the *Eulogium on*
« *MARCUS AURELIUS* by M. THOMAS. This Eulogium,
« which had been read at a public sitting of the
« French Academy, on the day appointed for the
« reception of the Archbishop of Toulouse, made a
« very deep impression. The great truths it contains,
« and which then appeared so much the more bold,
« as they seemed an indirect satire upon a ministry
« who openly hated all truth and all virtue, gave
« a fine relief to a work, which did not however
« require satire to obtain the greatest success.
« THOMAS was prohibited from printing the Eu-
« logium on *MARCUS AURELIUS*, and what is more
« extraordinary, the answer which he made to the
« inaugural discourse of the Archbishop of Tou-
« louse, and the discourse itself, were comprised
« in this prohibition. When it was permitted to
« praise virtue, the Eulogium on Marcus Aurelius
« reappeared with splendor : it is, without dispute,
« the best production of the author. He has given
« to this Eulogium a dramatic form, absolutely
» new, and the happiest, and most interesting that
« ever an orator conceived. It is the philosopher
« APOLLONIUS, the friend of Marcus Aurelius, who
« stops the funeral procession of the Emperor, in
« the midst of Rome ; and who, in the presence of

« an immense concourse of people, recalls the vir-
 « tues and good actions of the friend he had lost, and
 « the prince whom death had snatched from the
 « world. It is a sage who praises a sage ; but here
 « the sage is an orator. He addresses a people to whom
 « he appeals for the truth of what he asserts, and
 « who join their acclamations to the voice of the
 « panegyrist. The varied emotions of the orator,
 « which are interrupted, from time to time, and
 « those of the citizens which are in unison with
 « his : the words which he sometimes addresses
 « to COMMODUS, the son and successor of Marcus
 « Aurelius, who is present at the ceremony, and
 « who already announces, by the air with which he
 « listens to the philosopher, — that *Marcus Aure-*
 « *lius is indeed no more* : the deputies of nations
 « who, one after another, present to his ashes, the
 « regrets and homage of three quarters of the world :
 « the last words of Apollonius, who ventures, in
 « his grief, to predict the tyranny with which Com-
 « modus threatens the universe : in short, Commo-
 « dus himself, who, tired of hearing praised, what
 « he will never imitate, shakes his spear in a terrible
 « manner, and suddenly interrupts, in the mouth
 « of the orator, this Eulogium of virtue : all these
 « emotions form a moral drama, full of majesty and
 « interest, fit to be represented before philosophers
 « and kings.

« That nothing might be wanting to the success
 « and merit of this fine performance, the author

« has simplified his style, heightened its beauties,
« and improved its method.

« A particular obligation » adds La Harpe, « that
« letters owe to Thomas, is, that by a series of
« crowned works, and all of distinguished merit,
« he first gave lustre and importance to the prizes
« of the Academy, which, before his time, having
« been but seldom adjudged, except to very indif-
« ferent productions, scarcely attracted the atten-
« tion of the public, and were seldom contended
« for by men of superior talents. »

Thomas, who so often carried away the prize,
met with critics; but his *Marcus Aurelius* has si-
lenced envy.

(*Madam Necker.*)

Thomas was born in 1735, and died in the 50th
year of his age, in 1785.

who has been sixty years virtuous, and who, for twenty years together, has been useful to men : he, who, in the whole course of his life, committed no error ; and who, on the throne, betrayed no weakness : he, who was always good, friendly, generous, and just, why weep for him ? Romans, the funeral pomp of the just man is the triumph of virtue returning to the Great Supreme. Let us consecrate this solemnity with our Eulogium : I know that virtue has no need of this ; but it will serve as the homage of our gratitude. There are great men who resemble the gods. Loaded with their benefits, we have for them no recompence but that of praise. May I, at the end of my career, in surveying the life of Marcus Aurelius, honor, in your eyes, the last moments of mine ! and thou, who art here present ; thou, his successor and his son, listen to the virtues and actions of thy father : thou art about to reign : flattery waits to corrupt thee. Perhaps, for the last time, thou hearest a voice altogether free. Thy father, thou knowest, never accustomed me to speak the language of a slave. He loved truth : truth dictates his eulogium. May she also one day dictate thine.

It is a custom, in praising the dead, to

commence with the praise of their ancestors ; as if a great man had need of a descent : as if he , who is no more , was raised by merit other than his own. Let us guard , Romans , against offering such an outrage to virtue ; let us not believe that she has need of birth. Your family of the Cesars gave you four tyrants in succession , and Vespasian , who first caused your empire to flourish , was the grandson of a Centurion.

The great grandfather of Marcus Aurelius was born on the banks of the Tagus. To distinguish himself at Rome , he carried there those virtues which are no longer found but at a distance from Rome , — simplicity and antient manners. This heritage was preserved in his family. Such was the true nobleness of Marcus Aurelius. I know that he was the relation of Adrian ; but he considered this honor , if such it be , as a danger. I know that they wished to trace his descent from Numa ; but he was great enough to despise this chimera of pride : he placed his glory in being just.

Let us thank the gods that he was not originally destined for the throne. Supreme rank has corrupted more minds than it has fortified. Born to be a simple citizen , he be-

came great. Perhaps, if he had been born a prince, he would have been no more than a common man.

Every thing united to his formation. He first received that kind of education on which your ancestors always set so high a value, and which prepares, for the mind, a healthy and robust body. His infancy was not effeminated by luxury : he was not surrounded by a crowd of slaves, who, watching all his movements, thought themselves honored in obeying his caprice. They made him perceive that he was man, and the habit of suffering was the first lesson he received. Running, wrestling, and military dances, completed the developement of his strength : he was covered with dust on the same plains of Mars where your Scipios, your Mariuses, and your Pompeys exercised. I recall to you, Romans, this part of his education, because these manly institutions are nearly lost among you. Already you imitate the people of the East, amongst whom luxury degrades man from his birth, and your minds are almost enervated, before they know themselves. Romans, you are insulted by flattery : it is in communicating truth, that I give you a proof of my respect.

This first education of Marcus Aurelius

made him a soldier : to this, was united another which taught him knowledge. The language of Plato became as familiar to him as his own : eloquence instructed him how to speak to men, and history how to judge of them : the study of laws shewed him the basis and foundation of states : he reviewed all legislations, and compared the laws of different nations. He was not educated like those who are flattered, when they are yet ignorant and weak. No ill-judged respect feared to fatigue him by efforts. A severe discipline inured his younger years to industry ; and tho' a relation of the master of the world, he was obliged to instruct himself like the most common citizen.

Thus was formed the Prince who was to govern you : but it is the moral education which completes the man, and constitutes his greatness : it is that which enobles Marcus Aurelius. This education commenced with his birth : frugality, mildness, tender friendship, these were the virtues with which he was familiar on leaving his cradle. What do I say ? he was carried from Rome and from the court : it was feared that, to him, they might prove a fatal spectacle : for how, in Rome, where all the vices assemble from the

extremities of the world, can a mind be formed austere and pure? Could he have learned to condemn shew, where luxury corrupts even in poverty? to despise riches, where riches are the measure of honor? to become humane, where every thing that is powerful crushes that which is weak? to have morals, where vice has lost even the blush of shame? The protecting gods of your Empire sheltered Marcus Aurelius from this danger. His father carried him, at the age of three years, to a retreat, where he was placed, in trust, under the safeguard of morals. Far from Rome, he learned to make the happiness of Rome : far from the court, he merited to return there to command.

A greedy heir recollects, with pleasure, all those from whom he has received riches : Marcus Aurelius, more advanced in age, remembered all those, to whom, in infancy, he owed the example of virtue. « My father, said he, taught me to have nothing mean, nor effeminate : my mother, to avoid even the thought of evil : my grandfather, to be beneficent : my brother, to prefer truth to all things. » Here, Romans, are the reasons why he offers thanks to the gods at the head of a work in which he deposited all the sentiments of his heart.

He was soon taught, by preceptors, the duties of man, and these by their practice. They never said to him, Love the unfortunate; but they relieved, before him, those who were so. No one said to him, Be worthy of friends; he saw one of his teachers sacrifice his fortune to an oppressed friend. I saw a warrior, who, to give him a lesson of courage, shewed him his bosom all covered with wounds. In the same way they spoke to him of mildness, magnanimity, justice, and firmness. I myself had the glory of being associated with these illustrious instructors. Called to Rome from the extremity of Greece, and charged with his education, I was ordered to the palace. If he had been no more than a simple citizen, I would have gone there; but I conceived that the first lesson I owed a Prince was that of dependance and equality: I remained until he came to me. Pardon me, Marcus Aurelius! I thought then that thou wert only a common prince: I soon knew thee: and whilst thou asked for lessons, I often instructed myself.

He had not yet emerged from childhood when his breast had already caught the enthusiasm of virtue. At the age of twelve, he devoted himself to a life the most austere:

at fifteen, he ceded to his only sister, all the wealth of his father : at seventeen, he was adopted by Antoninus; and (I relate only what I witnessed) he wept at his own greatness.

O day, which, after the lapse of forty years, is to me still present ! He walked in the gardens of his mother. I was with him : we were conversing on the duties of man, when they came to announce his elevation : I saw his colour change, and he appeared a long time uneasy and sad. His family, in the mean time, surrounded him in transports of joy. Surprised at his sadness, we asked the cause. « Can you ask me that ? said he : I am an Emperor. »

From that time, Antoninus became to him a new master, who instructed him concerning the great virtues. The rights of men respected, the laws flourishing, Rome tranquil, the world happy ; such were the new lessons which Marcus Aurelius received during twenty years.

They were sufficient to form a great man ; but this great man was to have a character which distinguished him from all your emperors, and for this, he is indebted to philosophy alone. At the word philosophy, I

pause. What is this name, sacred in certain ages, and abhorred in others : by turns, the object of respect and hatred : which some princes have persecuted with fury, and others have placed at the side of their thrones? Romans! dare I praise philosophy in Rome, where philosophers have so often been calumniated, and from which they have been so often banished? It is hence, it is from these sacred walls, we were exiled to rocks and desert isles : here, our books were committed to the flames : here, our blood has streamed by the poignard. Europe, Asia, and Africa, 'have seen us wandering and proscribed, seeking an asylum in the dens of ferocious beasts, or condemned to work in chains with robbers and assassins (1).

(1) Musonius Rufus, a celebrated stoic, and Roman knight, was banished from Rome under Nero, and exiled to the island of Gyaros, was afterwards removed from this isle to work with galley-slaves in cutting the isthmus of Corinth. One of his friends, who recognized him, shewed signs of grief. *Thou art afflicted*, said the philosopher, *to find me work at piercing the isthmus for the utility of Greece : would you prefer to see me, like Nero, singing, and playing on the flute on a theatre?*

The persecutions, which this philosopher had endured under Nero, recommenced under Domitian.

What then ! Can philosophy be the enemy of men , and the scourge of states ? Romans , believe an old man , who , during eighty years , has studied virtue , and sought to practise it . Philosophy is that art by which men are enlightened and improved : it is the universal morality of people and of kings , established by nature and by eternal order . Look at this tomb : he for whom you weep , was a sage : philosophy , on the throne , has given twenty years of happiness to the world . It is in wiping away the tears of nations that she has refuted the calumny of tyrants .

Your emperor , from his infancy , was an enthusiast in her cause . He never sought to lose himself in sciences useless to man . He soon saw that the study of nature is an abyss , and applied philosophy wholly to morals . First , he cast his view on the different sects around him . He distinguished one which taught to raise man above himself . He thus discovered , as it were , a new world , in which pleasure and pain are extinguished : where the senses have lost all influence over the mind ; where poverty , riches , life , death , are nothing ; where virtue alone triumphs . Romans , it was this philosophy which gave you Cato and Brutus : it was she who support-

ed them amidst the ruins of liberty. She afterwards extended her sway, and became more formidable to your tyrants. It seems that she had become as a want to your oppressed ancestors, whose uncertain life was continually under the axe of despotism. In these ignominious times, she alone preserved the dignity of human nature. She taught men to live : she taught them to die : and, whilst tyranny degraded human nature, she raised it up with more force and greatness. This masculine philosophy was at all times made for strong minds. Marcus Aurelius embraced it with transport : from that moment, he had but one passion, that of forming himself to the most rigid virtues. Every thing that could aid him in this design, he considered as a benefit from heaven. He remarked that one of the happiest days of his life, was when, in youth, for the first time, he heard of Cato. He recollected, with gratitude, the names of those who made him acquainted with Brutus and Thraseas. He thanked the gods, that he had been enabled to peruse the maxims of Epictetus. His mind united itself to those extraordinary minds which existed before him. «Receive me, said he, among you : enlighten me, and elevate my senti-

ments, that I may learn to love only what is true, and to do that which is just. » The better to strengthen his heart with virtue, he wished to penetrate to the source of his duties : he wished to discover, if possible, the true design of nature with respect to man. Here, Romans, the mind of Marcus Aurelius is completely developed, — the chain of his ideas, the principles on which his moral life reposed. It is not I who shall present you this picture : it is Marcus Aurelius himself. I shall read you a writing which he penned with his own hand, more than thirty years ago, when he was not yet emperor. « Here, Apollonius, said he to me, take this writing, and if ever I deviate from the sentiments my hand has traced, make me blush in the eyes of the universe. » Romans, and thou, his successor and his son, judge whether the conduct of Marcus Aurelius was conformable to these great ideas; and whether he once deviated from the plan which he believed he read in nature.

Here the philosopher paused for a moment. The innumerable crowd of citizens who listened to him, pressed near him, eager to hear. To this great impulse, a profound silence ensued. Alone between the people and the philosopher, the new emperor was uneasy

and pensive. One hand of Apollonius leaned on the tomb, the other held a paper, traced with the pen of Marcus Aurelius. He resumed his discourse, and read as follows.

Conversation of Marcus Aurelius with himself (1).

« I meditated during the night. I laboured to find in what goodness consists, and on what basis justice rests. Marcus Aurelius, said I to myself, till the present moment thou hast been virtuous, or at least thou wert willing to be so : but who assures thee that thou wilt always have this intention? Who has even told thee, that what thou namest virtue is so in reality? I was frightened at this doubt, and I resolved to ascend, if possible, to first principles, to assure myself of myself, and to know the path which man ought to follow. The place and time favored my reflections. The night was deep and calm. All around me was in repose. I only heard, near my palace, the waters of the Tiber some-

(1) We know that Marcus Aurelius left a work entitled : *from himself to himself*, a work which breathes the sublimest philosophy and the purest morals. We have here endeavored to seize its general features.

what agitated. But this continued and hollow noise was itself favorable to thought, and I gave myself up to the following meditations.

« To know what virtue is, we must first know what is man. I asked myself, who am I? I perceived within me, sense, intelligence, and will, and I saw myself thrown, as if by chance, and by an unknown hand, on the surface of the earth. But whence come I, and who has placed me here? To answer, I was obliged to go out of myself, and interrogate nature. Then my eyes wandered around, and I contemplated the universe. In seeing this infinite assemblage of beings which compose it, worlds added to worlds, and myself so little and so weak, confined to a corner of the earth, and as if lost in immensity, I was, for a moment, discouraged. What then! said I, am I something in nature? The recollection of my intelligence on a sudden reanimated me. Marcus Aurelius, that which thinks, cannot be lost in the crowd. Then I continued my researches, and observing every thing, I examined the plan of the universe. I was struck with the harmony which I every where perceived; I saw that in the heavens, and on the earth, all beings give assistance to each other. The universe, said

I, is then an immense whole, all whose parts correspond. The greatness and simplicity of this idea elevated my mind. Soon this harmony excited the necessary idea of a cause. To combine so many means and so many separate beings, and to form, thus to say, but one being, there must be an intelligent mind. I called this mind, the universal mind (1), I called it God. At this name, I experienced a religious emotion, and the universe appeared to me something sacred. I here found a support, and here I stopped. To this cause I attributed all effects. I perceived that it was this which has stamped a character of unity on every thing that exists. It is this which has given, to the innumerable crowd of beings, whether inanimate or sensitive, the law which unites them, to make them at once serve to the good of each other, and to the harmony of the whole. But it is particularly among intelligent beings, that this primitive law appeared to act with more force. Men, by a secret instinct, seek

(1) Marcus Aurelius is here made to speak according to the system of the Stoics. He had adopted the principles of this sect, and these are every where found throughout his work.

and approach each other. In vain does the interest of passion divide : a more imperious force draws them together. It seems that a thinking being is abandoned and solitary in the midst of the physical world , and that thought has need of the commerce of thought. A second chain presented itself to me , that of our wants. In fine , I saw that men are united by still closer ties. For all minds , there is one and the same reason ; as for all physical beings , there is one and the same light. If there is but one reason , there is but one law. Men of all countries , and of all ages , are then subject to the same legislation : all are fellow - citizens of the same town : this town is the universe. Then it was that I saw fall around me all the barriers which separate nations , and I beheld only one people and one family.

I thus discovered , that by the very order of nature , there is fellowship among all men. From that moment I considered myself under a double relation. I saw myself as a weak portion of the universe , swallowed up in the whole , drawn on by that general impulse which conducts all beings. I considered myself afterwards as detached from that immense whole , and connected with men by

a particular relation. As a part of the whole, Marcus Aurelius, thou oughtest to receive, without murmuring, that which is a result of the general order : hence arise constancy in misfortune, and courage, which is nothing else than the resignation of a brave mind. As a part of society, thou oughtest to do that which is useful to man : hence all the duties of friend, husband, father, and citizen. To endure what the nature of the universe imposes : to do what the condition of man demands ; these are thy rules. I then conceived what virtue is, and I no longer feared to wander.

Here Apollonius stopped, and addressed himself to the son of Marcus Aurelius. « Emperor, said he, that which thou hast heard is suitable to all men, and might be the philosophy of Epictetus, as well as of thy father ; but what follows, belongs to thee. It is the philosophy of a prince ; it is that of all men who are worthy of reigning : may it be thine ! Listen to thy predecessor and thy father. » Then he thus proceeded.

Soon bringing back all my ideas to myself, I wished to apply these principles to my conduct. I had discovered what was my place in the universe ; I examined also my place in society : I saw, with consternation, that I there occupied the rank of a prince : Marcus

Aurelius, if thou wert confounded with the crowd, thou wouldst have to answer to nature for thyself only : but millions of men shall one day obey thee : the degree of happiness allotted to each, is marked : all that is wanting of this happiness by thy fault, becomes thy crime. If, in the whole world, a single tear falls, which thou couldst have staid, thou art guilty. Indignant nature will say, I have confided to thee my children to render them happy : what hast thou done with them? why have I heard these lamentations on earth? why have men, with uplifted hands, prayed me to shorten their existence? why has the mother wept her new born son? the harvest which I destined for the nourishment of the poor, why has it been snatched from them? what wilt thou answer? the miseries of men will plead against thee, and justice will engrave thy name among those of princes who have transgressed her laws.

Here the people cried : *Never, never.* A thousand voices were raised together : one said, *Thou hast been our father* : another, *Thou didst never suffer oppressors* : others, *Thou hast solaced our evils* : and a thousand at once : *we have blessed thee, we bless thee, O wise, O merciful, O just Emperor : may thy*

memory be sacred ; may it be adored for ever. It shall be, replied Apollonius : it shall be revered in all ages : but it was the fear of evils which he might have occasioned that carried him on to promote your happiness, and to merit those acclamations which resound from his tomb. Hear what he adds.

To prevent thy name from being dishonored, know thy duties : they embrace all nations : they spring up every hour, every moment. It is only by death that thy obligations to a citizen cease ; but the birth of each citizen imposes a new duty. Thou must labor whilst it is day, for the day is destined for action : often thou must watch in the night, for crimes watch while princes sleep : weakness must be protected : violence must be chained. Marcus Aurelius, speak not of ease ; so long as there is upon earth one guilty, or unfortunate individual, there is no ease for thee.

Frightened with my duties, I wished to know the means by which I could fulfil them, and my fear redoubled. I saw that my obligations were above man, and that my faculties were only those of man. It would be necessary that the eye of a prince should embrace what is at an immense distance from him, and that all the places of his em-

pire be assembled in one point, under his view. It would be necessary that his ear should be struck, at once, with all the groans, the complaints, the cries of his subjects. It would be necessary that his power be as prompt as his will, to destroy and combat continually all the forces which struggle against the general good : but the organs of the prince are as weak as those of the lowest of his subjects. Marcus Aurelius, between truth and thee, rivers, mountains, and seas, will be continually interposed : often wilt thou only be separated from her by the walls of thy palace, and yet she will not reach thee : thou wilt borrow assistance, but this assistance will be an imperfect remedy for thy weakness. Action intrusted to other arms, either changes the object, or is too weak or too precipitate. Nothing is executed as the prince conceived : he is told nothing, as if he himself had seen it. They exaggerate the good ; they extenuate the evil ; they justify crimes, and the prince, always weak or deceived, exposed to the infidelity, or error of those whom he has instructed to see and to understand, finds himself continually placed between the inability of knowing, and the necessity of acting.

I passed from the examination of my senses, to that of my reason, and I again compared it with my duties. I saw that to govern well, I had need of an intelligence almost divine; which, at one glance, might perceive all principles and their application, and not be influenced either by country, by times, or by rank : which might judge all according to truth, and nothing by convention. Is this then the reason of man? Is it mine?

At last I inquired, if I was sure of my will. Ask thyself then, if all that surrounds thee has not taken hold of thy mind to corrupt, or to lead it astray? Marcus Aurelius, (and here Apollonius for a moment fixed his eyes on the new Emperor,) tremble, especially when thou shalt be upon the throne : thousands of individuals will seek to wrest from thee thy will, that they may give thee their own; and for thy generous passions, they will offer in exchange their vile ones. What wilt thou be then? the sport of all: thou wilt obey, when thou shouldst command, thou wilt have the pomp of an Emperor, and the mind of a slave. Yes, thy mind shall be no longer thine own : it will submit to some daring, and contemptible man, who is resolved to guide it at will.

These reflexions threw me almost into despair. O God, cried I, seeing the race of men, which thou hast cast upon the earth, had need of being governed, why hast thou given men only to reign over them? Beneficent Being, have compassion on princes; they are perhaps more to be pitied than the people they govern; for it is doubtless more frightful to commit, than to suffer evil: at this moment I deliberated whether I should renounce this dangerous and terrible power, and I was for a moment resolved, yes, I resolved to abdicate the empire....

At these words, the Romans, who listened with profound silence, appeared frightened, as if threatened with the loss of their Emperor: they forgot that this great man was no more. This illusion soon ceased: it might be said, they had lost him a second time. In a tumultuous agitation, they inclined towards his tomb: women, children, old men, all threw themselves near it: all hearts were moved: tears flowed from every eye: a confused noise of sadness broke forth from all parts of this immense assembly; Apollonius himself was troubled: the paper which he held, fell from his hand: he embraced the coffin: the sight of this disconsolate old man appeared to augment the general sorrow: by degrees the murmur lessened. Apollonius raised himself, like a man awaking from a dream, and his eye still half wandering by grief, and, leaning on

the tomb, he again took the paper, and thus continued with a tremulous voice.

I did not dwell long on this project of renouncing the empire. I saw that the gods called me to serve my country, and that I ought to obey. And what! said I to myself, a soldier who quits his post, is punished with death, and thou, wilt thou quit thine? Is it the necessity of being virtuous on the throne with which thou art frightened? Then I thought I heard a secret voice which thus addressed me: Whatsoever thou doest, thou wilt be always a man, but think to what a degree of perfection a man may raise himself? Mark the distance between Antoninus and Nero. I resumed courage, and not being able to improve my senses, I resolved to seek every means of improving my mind, that is, of perfecting my reason and fortifying my will: I found these means in the very idea of my duties. Marcus Aurelius, when God puts thee at the head of the human race, thou art associated for a part of the government of the world. To govern well, thou oughtest to catch the spirit of God himself. Raise thyself towards him: meditate on this Great Being: draw from his bosom the love of order and of general good, that the har-

mony of the universe may shew thee what ought to be the harmony of thy empire. Those prejudices and passions, which govern so many princes and men, will be extinguished in thee; thou wilt see only thy duties and thy God, and that supreme reason which ought to be thy model and thy law.

But the resolution of observing constantly this supreme reason will not suffice: it is necessary that thou mayest not be led astray by error. Then I began to review all my opinions, and I compared each of my ideas with the eternal idea of truth and justice: I saw that there was no good, except that which is useful to society, and conformable to order: no evil, but the contrary. I examined physical evils; in them I only perceived the inevitable effect of the laws of the universe. I wished to meditate on pain: night was already advanced: my eye-lids were fatigued from want of repose: I struggled, but was obliged to yield to sleep; in this interval, I had a dream: I imagined I saw a multitude of men assembled in a vast portico: they had all, in their appearance, something noble and great. Although I had never lived with them, their features were not those of strangers. I thought I had often contem-

plated their statues at Rome : I surveyed them all, when a terrible and loud voice resounded in the portico : *Mortals, learn to suffer*. At the same moment, I saw flames kindle, in which one thrust his hand : to another was brought poison : he drank, and made a libation to the gods : a third was standing near a mutilated statue of liberty : in one hand, he held a book, in the other, a sword, on the point of which he gazed : farther off, I distinguished a man all bloody; but calm, and more tranquil than his executioner : I ran to him, crying : O Regulus, is it thee ? I could no longer support the sight of his sufferings, and turned aside my looks. When I perceived Fabricius in poverty, Scipio in exile, Epictetus in chains, Seneca and Thraseas, with their veins open, and looking, with a tranquil eye, on their streaming blood : surrounded by these great and unfortunate men, I shed tears : they appeared astonished. One of them, (it was Cato,) approached me, and said : weep not, but imitate us; learn to conquer pain. He nevertheless appeared to turn against himself the sword he held : I wished to stay his hand : I shuddered, and awoke. Reflecting on this dream, I conceived that these pre-

tended evils ought not to shake my courage : I resolved to be man ; to do good , and to bear evil.

But , said Apollonius , there are more sensible evils , and which make a deeper impression on the mind ; these are ingratitude , injury , and calumny ; and all the vices of the wicked , which torment and fatigue us. Marcus Aurelius asks himself , whether these vile and cruel men merit our attention and goodness.

Philosopher , said the young Emperor hastily , I also make the same demand.

Emperor , said Apollonius , I shall read to you the answer of thy predecessor and father. He ponders , in silence , on the evils which man inflicts on man , and says to himself :

The source of thy actions must be in thy own breast , and not in the breast of others. Thou art injured ; of what importance is it ? God is thy law-giver and thy judge. There are wicked men : they are useful to thee : without them , what need would there be for virtues ? Thou complainest of the ungrateful ! imitate nature ; she gives all to man , and seeks nothing in return : but injury ? injury vilifies him who commits , and not him who receives it : and calumny ? thank the gods that thy enemies , to speak evil of thee , have recourse to falsehood : but disgrace ? there is no disgrace for the just.

He therefore resolved, if necessary, to displease men, in order to serve them : he consented to be odious, in order to be useful.

Having examined the evils, he proposed now to review the blessings of life.

I asked myself, said he, what is reputation? a cry, which is heard for a moment, and then dies in a corner of the earth : and the praise of courts? a tribute of interest to power, or of baseness to pride : and authority? the greatest misfortune for him who is not the most virtuous of men ; and life?... (at this moment, I perceived, in the place where I meditated, one of those sand instruments which measure time ; my eye was fixed upon it : I looked at the grains of dust, which, in falling, marked the portions of its duration.) Marcus Aurelius, said I to myself, time was given thee to be useful to men : what hast thou already done for them? Life vanishes ; years flow on ; one falls on another like these grains of sand. Make haste : thou art placed between two abysses, — of time which preceded, and of time which must follow thee. Between these, life is a point : let it be marked by thy virtues : be good ; be free, and despise death.

In pronouncing this word, (he repeated this often to me,)

he felt his mind shaken; he reflected a moment, and continued.

What! death frightens thee; go, to die is but an action of life, and perhaps the easiest: death is the end of all our struggles: it is the moment in which thou canst say, at last my virtue belongs to me: it is this that frees thee from the greatest of dangers, that of becoming wicked. Marcus Aurelius, thou art embarked, follow thy route, and when thou seest the end of thy voyage, disembark, and thank the gods on the shore.

Thus he ran over, in succession, all the objects which agitate and trouble man, to learn how to judge them, and to conform, in every thing, his views to those of nature. He guarded himself against opinions: he proposed also to secure himself against the influence of the senses. Prince, it appears that man really combats, and is opposed to himself. My reason makes my force; my senses, my weakness. It is my reason which raises me to ideas of order and of general good: my senses bring me down to personal views, and make me descend to myself. Thus my reason enobles, and my senses vilify me. Thy father, to be free, labored to subdue the latter; from that moment he devoted himself to a life the most austere, and said:

I will subdue my passions, and even the most terrible of all, because the most agree-

able, the love of pleasure. Life is a combat; we must continually struggle : I shall shun luxury because luxury enervates the mind through all the senses : I shall avoid it, because a luxurious prince exhausts his treasures to satisfy his caprice. I shall almost live as if I were poor : though a prince, I have only the wants of a man. I shall give to sleep the time of which I cannot deprive it : I shall say to myself every morning : this is the hour when crimes awake, when passions and vices take possession of the universe, when the unhappy awake to the sentiment of their evils; when the oppressed, moving in his prison, again feels the weight of his chains. It is for virtue, it is for beneficence, it is for the sacred authority of the laws, to awake at the same moment : let labor alone form the relaxation of my labor. If study and business occupy all my hours, pleasure will find no void of which she can take possession.

Here Commodus, with a troubled voice, again interrupted Apollonius : What ! are all pleasures denied a prince ?

Thy father made the same question, replied the philosopher, and here is his answer.

No, Marcus Aurelius, thou shalt not be

deprived of all pleasures; the gods have reserved thee the most exquisite and pure. Thy pleasures are to soften pain, to console the unfortunate, to be able, by a word, to relieve provinces, and to render every day two hundred nations happy. Tell me, would you prefer either the languors of voluptuousness, the shew of gladiators, or the more barbarous amusements of the arena? Each duty ought to be to thee a source of pleasure.

(Prince, such was the answer of thy father to the question thou hast made.) He paused. He had perceived what nature required of him: he knew God, his mind, his reason, his place in the universe, his place in society, the duties of man, the duties of a prince. He had endeavoured to fortify his mind against all the obstacles which might one day retard its march. Then he raised his hands towards heaven, and said; (and thou also, young Emperor, say with him.)

O God! thou hast not made kings to be oppressors, nor people to be oppressed: I do not ask thee to make me better: have I not will to perfect, to combat, and to overcome myself? but I ask, what I cannot give to myself, — to know and understand the truth: I ask that best of blessings — friends. May Marcus Aurelius die before he cease to be just.

He recovers himself : he perceives that night was already gone, and that the sun rose above the horizon. Already the people, in crowds, filled the streets of Rome : already acclamations were heard which announced that Antoninus advanced towards the public place.

I went out, added he, to join my father : in all the course of his actions, I saw that he practised that which I had resolved to do, and I felt myself still more encouraged to virtue.

The Romans had listened in profound silence. During this reading, their hearts were filled, by turns, with regret, admiration, and tenderness. They had seen this great man act ; during forty years they had been witnesses of his virtues : but of his principles they were ignorant. Their eyes, with deeper sadness, were fixed upon his ashes, and soon, as if by an involuntary movement, they were directed towards the son of Marcus Aurelius, who was to prove unworthy of this name ; and whose looks, they knew, were down-cast.

Son of Marcus Aurelius, cried Apollonius, these looks, turned upon thee, ask, if thou wilt resemble thy father ? Forget not the tears which thou seest flow ; (and turning towards the people) let us suspend our regrets to complete the homage we render to his virtues : I have only presented to you one half

of the portrait : we must see him faithful to his principles, following the plan which he traced, and applying, during twenty years, to the happiness of the world, those ideas of morals, which philosophy had suggested to him when far from the throne.

Marcus Aurelius perceived that nature has infused a general spirit of fellowship among men; from this he saw spring up the idea of liberty, because there is no fellowship where there is only a master and a slave; no property, because without the assurance of possession there is no longer any social order: no justice, because justice alone can reestablish the equilibrium which the passions tend to destroy: nor, in short, is there benevolence, since men being all associated, there is no man vile in the eyes of nature; and if all have not the same right to the same rank, they have all a right to the same happiness. Such was the general principle of his reign.

I begin with liberty, Romans, because liberty is the first right of man, the right of obeying, and fearing the laws alone. Wo to the slave who dreads to pronounce this name! Wo to the country in which it is a crime to pronounce the name of liberty! Under your tyrants it was a crime: but what has their

vain fury produced? Have they extinguished, in the breasts of your fathers, this generous sentiment? It may be combated; it cannot be destroyed: it subsists wherever there are strong minds: it supports itself in chains: it lives in prisons, and revives under the axes of your lictors. As long as ye possess it, Romans, ye will have courage and virtues. Marcus Aurelius in ascending the throne, knew this sacred right: he saw that man, born free, but requiring to be governed, submitted himself to laws, though never to the caprices of a master; that no man has a right arbitrarily to command another: that he, who usurps this power, destroys the power itself. He had seen, in your annals, the wrongs of your ancestors under Tiberius and Nero, with whom there was no other virtue than to know how to die: — he had seen a despotism as odious and still more base, that of the freedmen: he had seen the empire oppressed, the world enslaved, and a man, under the name of Emperor, who extinguished all, because he made himself the center of all, and seemed to say to nations: — your property and blood, all is mine: suffer and die. I know, Romans, that you have never given, nor could give these odious rights to

your Emperors ; but seeing they are at once princes, magistrates, pontifs and generals, who shall put barriers to their power, if they put none themselves?

O gods, must two hundred nations be unfortunate, if it happen that a single individual is without virtue? Marcus Aurelius, armed with all the force of despotism, voluntarily throws it off. Not to abuse his power, he sets limits to it on all sides. He augments the authority of laws, which too many Emperors wished to destroy : he strengthens that of magistrates, who often were but phantoms or slaves. Never under his empire did a senator, or weak citizen dare to assert that the prince ought not to be submissive to the laws. « Unfortunate, Marcus Aurelius would « have said to him, what have I done that « thou shouldst vilify me? Learn that this « submission is my glory : learn that the « power to do what is unjust, is a weakness. » Romans, I fear not to say it, never in the happiest days of Rome, never even under your consuls, have your ancestors been more free than you. Of what importance is it to be governed by one, or by many? Kings, dictators, consuls, decemvirs, emperors, all these different names express but the same thing —

ministers of the law. The law is every thing : the constitution of states may change : the rights of citizens are always the same. They are independent both of the ambitious who usurp , and of the vile who barter their freedom : founded in nature, they are, like her, unalterable.

I can then call you all to witness, and ask, whether Marcus Aurelius ever oppressed a citizen : if such be present, let him rise and contradict me !

All the people cried : *None , none.*

I also ask , whether, under his reign , a single individual among you was ever oppressed by the freedmen of his palace , who, making themselves slaves to become tyrants, command with as much pride as they obey ; who, armed with a power not their own, greedy of enjoying, and uncertain of its duration, put every spring of it into motion, and hasten the reign of public slavery ? Say, Romans, did such an individual exist under his reign ?

All again cried with one voice : *None , none.* He continued.

Thanks to the immortal gods , you had a

prince, and this prince had no master. That you might be free, he neither allowed himself to be a slave, nor a tyrant : he defended your liberty against himself : he defended it against all those who surrounded the throne.

But for what would this liberty have served, if at the same time, the possession of your property had not been secured? What do I say? where one is wanting, the other is but a phantom. Alas! there was a time, when Rome and the empire were a prey to plunder; a time, when arbitrary confiscations, odious exactions, prodigality without motive, and without cause, unceasing rapine, desolated families, exhausted provinces, and empoverished the poor. Almost all the riches of the empire were devoured by a greedy master, or by some favorite who deigned to divide them with his chief : this is a small part of the evils your ancestors suffered. And if such evils existed always upon earth, would it not be better to wander in the woods, and to share the retreats of savage beasts? no greedy hand would come there to snatch the food from the hungry man. The cave which he selected, would serve as an asylum, and he might say : here — the rock which covers me, and the water that quenches my thirst, are

mine : here — I do not pay for the air I breathe. None of you, Romans, under the empire of Marcus Aurelius, was ever reduced to a state which would prompt this choice. He began by suppressing the tyranny of revenue; a kind of war in which law is made to combat against justice, and the sovereign against his subjects. Every charge which serves only to increase the revenue, is put aside : every claim of the treasury, which is equivocal, is decided against it. He rejects confiscations as a barbarous abuse, which punishes the son for the father, the innocent for the guilty, because it every where seeks to find the rich criminal. He is not willing that the crimes of citizens become the patrimony of a prince, and that he who is the chief of a country, may find a shameful profit in whatever afflicts it.

This moderation extended to the public treasury. You have seen him, under the most pressing wants, give back all that was due, when he thought the tax too burdensome. It was during the time when wants multiplied, that he multiplied his benefits on the people. But in speaking of Marcus Aurelius, I blush to employ the language which flattery has consecrated to princes. That which I call

benefits, he called justice. No; the state has no right upon misery: it would be as shameful, as barbarous, were we to endeavour to enrich it from poverty, and to snatch from him who has little, to give to him who has all. Under Marcus Aurelius the labourer was respected: the man who had his arms, could enjoy the necessaries which his arms procured: luxury and effeminacy payed in riches what poverty paid in labor. He gave a still greater example: placed between ardent enemies, and an oppressed people, it is on himself, Romans, he raises taxes, which without empoverishing you, you could not have paid. He is asked where are the treasures for war? here they are, said he, shewing the furniture of his palace. Lay bare these walls; — carry away these statues and these pictures; transport these vases of gold to the public place: let all be sold in the name of the state: let these vain ornaments, which serve for the decorations of the palace of the Emperors, serve for the expence of the empire. I was with him at the time he gave, and that they executed these orders: I appeared surprised. He turned towards me: « Apollo-
« nius, said he, what! thou admirest also as
« the people! would it be right then, instead

« of these vases of gold, to sell the pitcher
« of the poor man, and the corn which nourishes his children? » Pausing for a moment,
« My friend, said he, perhaps these riches
« have drawn tears from twenty nations : this
« sale will be a small expiation for the evils
« done to humanity. »

Romans, these empty apartments, these walls almost naked, had more shew and grandeur for you, than the golden palaces of your tyrants. The house of Marcus Aurelius, in this condition, resembled an august temple, which has no other ornament than the divinity that inhabits it.

It was not enough thus to dispossess himself : he had the courage to refuse to others that which he had not the right to give. He learned to defend himself against that generosity which is sometimes the malady of great minds — a seduction so much the more dangerous, as it resembles virtue, but which for the happiness of one, sometimes causes the misery of thousands.

Bad Emperors corrupted camps, to make of them a defence against Rome : and gold lavished upon armies served to forge the chains which despotism extended over the universe. Marcus Aurelius would have blush-

ed to purchase the armies of the empire against the empire itself. He grants to them in the name of the state, all that the state owes, but he gives nothing in the name of the prince : he is not willing that, enriched by his hands, they accustom themselves to separate the quality of citizens from that of soldiers.

Apollonius was continuing, when a centurion, who was near him, suddenly interrupted him.

Philosopher, said he, permit a soldier to cite a trait of our great Emperor of which thou art perhaps ignorant. We were in Germany, and he had just obtained a victory : we asked him for a distribution of money : this was his answer : I recollect it well : we were on the field of battle, and he held in his hand his helmet pierced with javelins. « My friends, said he, we have conquered ; but « if you must have the spoil of citizens, of « what importance is your victory to the « state ? All that I give you beyond what is « due, will be drawn from the blood of your « neighbours and your fathers. » We blushed and asked nothing.

I knew this reply of Marcus Aurelius, said the old man to the soldier : it is well that thou hast communicated it to the common

people. Then Apollonius resumed his discourse : he spoke of justice, and how it was executed by Marcus Aurelius at Rome. Of what importance is it, said he, that the chief is neither an oppressor nor a tyrant, if citizens oppress citizens? The despotism of each individual, if without bounds, would not be less terrible than the despotism of a prince.

Personal interest every where attacks the interest of the whole : all fortunes are at variance : all passions at war : it is justice which combats and prevents anarchy. Romans, cried he, why is it necessary that amongst men, every thing that is the source of good, may also become the source of evil? This sacred justice, the stay and support of society, under your tyrants, had become the very principle of its destruction. There had arisen, within your walls, a race of men, who, under the pretext of supporting the laws, betrayed all laws; living by accusations, bartering calumnies, and always ready to sell innocence to hatred, or riches to avarice. Then every thing was a crime of state. It was a crime to claim the rights of men, to praise virtue, to lament the unhappy, to cultivate the arts which elevate the mind : it was a crime to invoke the sacred name of

the laws. Actions, words, silence itself, all were accused. What do I say? Even thought itself was divined; to find it culpable it was misinterpreted in a thousand ways. Thus the art of information poisoned all; informers were loaded with the riches of the empire, and the excess of their dignities was proportioned to that of their infamy. What resource is there in a state, where innocence is butchered in the name of the laws which ought to defend it? Often they did not even deign to have recourse to the vain formality of laws : arbitrary power, without control, imprisoned, exiled, or pronounced sentence of death. Romans, you know whether Marcus Aurelius held in horror this tyrannic justice, which puts the will of man in place of the decision of the law : which makes the life and fortune of a citizen to depend on error or on mistake : whose strokes are the more terrible, as they are often silent and concealed, and only permit the unfortunate to feel the arrow which pierces him, without seeing the hand from which it came; or which, separating him from all the world, and condemning him to live that he may die continually, leave him under a weight of chains, at once ignorant of his ac-

cuser and his crime ; far from freedom whose august image is for ever veiled from his eyes ; far from the laws , which , in prison or in exile , ought always to answer to the cries of the unfortunate by whom they are invoked. Marcus Aurelius considered the formalities of law as so many barriers which prudence has set up against injustice. Under him , those crimes of high treason disappeared , which multiply only under bad princes. Every accusation was sent to the accused , with the name of the accuser : it was a check against base men : it was a rampart for those who have nothing to fear , when allowed the privilege of defence.

Citizens , the unfortunate who is pursued , seeks refuge in the temples of worship , where he embraces the altars of the gods. Under Marcus Aurelius , your sanctuaries and your temples were the tribunals of your magistrates : « May all those , said he , who fear oppression retire under that sacred shelter : *There* , and I call the gods to witness , if ever you are oppressed , I wish , Romans , that you may find an asylum against myself. »

With what dignity did this great man speak to magistrates and judges of their duty ! « If you have to judge your enemy , felicitate your-

selves : you have, at the same time, a great passion to conquer, and a great action to perform. If power wishes to corrupt you, put, on one side, the price that is offered; on the other, the virtue and the right of esteeming yourselves. If they intimidate you... But who can make you afraid? Is it I whom, [when you are doing a good action] you fear to offend? Hated by your Emperor because you have been just, it is you who would be great; it is I who would be unhappy and culpable. » Thus, the mind of Marcus Aurelius animated all the tribunals of the empire.

Under him, justice was then neither venal, nor corrupted, nor precipitate, nor slow : it was neither necessary to seize it by impurity, nor to purchase it with presents. A horrible abuse multiplied the days in which the tribunals were shut, as if on these days, they had prevented the rich from usurpation, the powerful from committing violence, the unfortunate from feeling the weight of his sorrow. Romans, time flowed for dissensions and for crimes, and its course was suspended for the re-establishment of order. Marcus Aurelius reformed this abuse : he thought that even on sacred days, justice rendered to men cannot give offence to the

gods; and time, the most sacred of treasures, was restored to the country.

Occupied with the general administration, he knew how to find moments to decide himself the affairs of citizens. « Philosopher, [suddenly observed a man in the crowd,] like thee I respect and admire Marcus Aurelius, but believest thou that the power of judging is never to be dreaded by a prince? » I know it, replied Apollonius: one ought to dread to be accustomed to power; he was unwilling to be, at the same time, both the magistrate and the law: so that if he pronounces alone, he may not be deceived: and if he presides in the tribunals, his authority, in spite of him, may not corrupt the judges, nor flattery sacrifice the law to him who is master of all. But these abuses which were more than once felt under our tyrants, depend on the man who tolerates them, or on him to whom they owe their origin. The power of judging, in a prince, has also its advantages when the prince has virtues. Dare I say it, he is then nearer the people: he hears more particularly the misfortunes of men: he learns to submit his thoughts to the law: and will, always impetuous, accustoms itself to feel the chain by which it is restrained. Such was the

mind of Marcus Aurelius in its judgments. I never weary in speaking of the justice of this great man. I have seen him pass many nights in succession, in the examination of an important affair which he had to decide. We studied together : I wished to engage him to take repose. « Apollonius, said he to me, let
« us give an example to all these men greedy
« of pleasure, and fatigued with business,
« who pretend to separate labors and honors. » Be not surprised at this language : it is conformable to the system of a prince who was just from principle, and who, from duty, loving all men, occupied himself equally with the interests of all.

Here the philosopher paused : he appeared to be filled with a deep and sad sentiment.

Romans, I confess to you, said he, there is an idea which overwhelms me, and which has more than once, excited sorrow : it is the immense inequality which pride has placed between men. Nature always beneficent, had created beings equal and free : tyranny came, and made them weak and unfortunate. Then a small number seized upon all : it usurped the dominion of the world, and the human race is disinherited. Hence arose insulting

contempt and proud disdain, ferocious sway, and the pity of pride, still more cruel than contempt. It belonged to philosophy upon the throne to avenge those insults offered to the human race. O you, who are neither patricians nor senators; you who have neither riches nor honors, but who are citizens and men, I fear not that your secret imprecations may mix with the praises with which I honor the memory of your Emperor. His sympathizing goodness saw, in all the orders of the state, a numerous society of brothers, relations and friends. How often have you seen him, moved by your wants, soften them by his bounty, and, to know them, penetrating to the bosom of your families! To console you in your labors, he bestowed upon you numerous amusements and *fêtes*, and by the allurements of public shews, making the poor man forget his poverty, he suspended the sentiment of his evils: he made him forget, for some moments at least, the goods which he did not enjoy. Under him the most obscure name was not an exclusion from the offices and dignities of the empire. To distinguish ranks, Marcus Aurelius consulted prejudices; to appreciate men, he judged but men. The hand which had di-

rected the plough-share, has conducted, under him, the pretorian guards : and to choose a husband to his daughter, he cast his eyes on Pompeius, who, instead of ancestors, had merit. An alliance with virtue, said he, cannot dishonor the master of the world.

At this moment Apollonius, casting his eyes on the assembly of Roman people, perceived Pertinax : he was a warrior celebrated by his victories : and his merit was destined to raise him to the empire. He entered Rome with a part of his army, accompanying the body of Marcus Aurelius. He was at a small distance from the crowd : his hands upon his spear, and with his back leaning sadly against a column : suddenly Apollonius addressed him :

It is thee whom I call to witness, Pertinax ! thou hast the courage to avow that thy father was a slave, and died free : this gives thee a greater claim to our respect. Dare I here call to remembrance a disgrace which does not honor thee less than thy Emperor. Thou wast accused : he was surprised, and thou appearedst to be guilty. Soon thy innocence was manifest : Marcus Aurelius was great enough to pardon the wrong he had committed : he named thee senator and consul : men, who thought themselves thy rivals,

dared to say, that the glory of the consulate was disgraced by thy birth : « And what, « replied Marcus Aurelius, the place of the « Scipios disgraced by a warrior who resembles them ! »

He who thus elevated the illustrious Plebeians, could not forget the nobility of the empire : but he wishes to have its titles supported by its actions. If it be only proud, he despises it : if it have virtues, he honors it ; if it be poor, he supports it : he is not willing, that in a town corrupted by luxury, men, whose duty it is to be generous, should descend to the most shameful means of self-aggrandizement.

In speaking of the protection which Marcus Aurelius afforded to useful men of all ranks, can I forget, Romans, that which he extended to ourselves, and to all those, who, like him, cultivated their reason by study ? I take the gods to witness that it is not the recollection of a selfish interest, which at this moment, makes me praise my Emperor. If, during sixty years, I have neither aspired to honors, nor courted riches ; if, beloved by Marcus Aurelius, I have justified my power by my conduct ; if, sometimes injured, I have answered hatred by good will, and calumny by bene-

fits, I have perhaps a right to speak of all that this great man has done for philosophy and letters. I know not whether they still have enemies at Rome : I know not whether proscription and exile shall yet be our portion ; but at no time can they extinguish the cry of nature, which warns us that the people have a right to happiness. We shall weep over the evils of the human race ; and when , in some portion of the world , there shall rise up a prince like Marcus Aurelius , who shall announce that he proposes to place with him on the throne , both knowledge and morals ; from the bosom of our retreats , we shall together raise our hands and offer thanks to the gods. Here I could wish to reanimate my trembling voice. Marcus Aurelius , from the summit of his Capitol , gives a signal ; all those throughout the empire , who love and seek truth , assemble around him ; he encourages and protects them : you have seen him more than once , when he was Emperor , enter the public schools to instruct himself : it might be said that he came to the crowd to seek truth which flies from kings. Under his reign , we were useful ; to us this glory had been sufficient : to this , that great man added honors. He has raised many among us to

the first places of the empire, and has caused statues to be erected to them at the side of Socrates and Cato. Romans, if your tyrants could rise from their tombs, and reappear within our walls, how would they be astonished to see their own statues thrown down and mutilated, and, in their place, those of the successors of men, whom they had dragged to prison, and whose blood had been shed on the scaffold?

Marcus Aurelius, in throwing his eyes over all classes of citizens, casts a marked look on those who are unfortunate enough to despise virtue. Their irregularities are arrested by wise laws, but the first law was his own example. His authority astonished effeminacy: weak minds felt the courage of virtue; those who were ambitious had morals from interest: those whom he cannot correct, he laments and chides, but he cannot hate. Austere to himself alone, he possessed that mild humanity which is so well accommodated to our weakness. Wicked men dared to offend him: he disdained a vengeance to which there was an easy recourse, and the philosopher forgot the injury done to the Magistrate.

Here Commodus made a movement: his visage was

changed : his eyes inflamed. He appeared ready to speak ; but he stopped , and the philosopher proceeded.

Goodness formed the character of this great man : it appeared in his discourse , and in his actions : it was painted in the features of his face : what do I say ? it was the object of his worship. Look at that Capitol , where his hand erected to her a temple. O God of the universe , in almost all countries of the world , thou hast been insulted even in the adoration that was paid thee ! In all places hath barbarous superstition had altars , where to appease thee , she has offered the groans and cries of human victims : Marcus Aurelius invoked thee under the idea of a Being equally omnipotent and good ; he painted thee to men as thou wast painted in his heart. No ; I shall never forget that day , that solemn day , when a prince , a sovereign pontiff , as Emperor of his country , entered for the first time the temple dedicated to goodness , where he burned the first incense upon its altar , in the midst of the acclamations and joy of a people , who appeared to take him for the divinity himself. Romans , it was impossible for your ancestors to find Manlius guilty , while they had in view the Capitol , which

he had saved ; and here I supplicate that the sight of this new temple, in this same Capitol, may arrest your Emperors, as often as they would commit a criminal or tyrannic action. People, may all those who reign over you, come and swear on this altar, to be good like Marcus Aurelius ; and to think like him, that every benefit granted to man is an act of worship to the Deity !

In this assembly of Roman people, there was a crowd of citizens and strangers from all parts of the empire. Some had been a long while at Rome : others from different provinces had followed the funeral Chariot, and had accompanied it from respect. On a sudden one of them (he was the first magistrate of a town at the foot of the alps) raised his voice.

Orator, said he, thou hast spoken to us of the good which Marcus Aurelius did to unhappy individuals ; speak to us of that which he has done for towns and nations : recall the famine which desolated Italy. We heard the cries of children who demanded bread : our barren fields and empty markets left us no resource : we invoked Marcus Aurelius, and the famine ceased. Then he approached, touched the tomb, and said : « I present to the ashes of Marcus Aurelius the homage of all Italy. »

Another man appeared. His face was embrowned by the burning sun : his features had something in them inexpressibly noble, and he was the tallest of the whole assembly : he was an African. : he raised his voice and said :

I was born at Carthage : I saw our houses and our temples consumed by a general conflagration. Escaped from the flames, and lying several days on ruins and heaps of ashes, we invoked Marcus Aurelius : Marcus Aurelius repaired our misfortunes. Carthage thanked the gods that it was Roman. — He approached, touched the tomb, and said : « I present to the ashes of Marcus Aurelius the homage of Africa. »

Three inhabitants of Asia advanced. In one hand of each was incense, in the other garlands of flowers. One of them thus spoke :

In Asia we saw the soil, on which we trod, crumble under our feet, and our three towns overthrown by one earthquake. In the midst of desolation we invoked Marcus Aurelius, and our towns arose from their ruins. — They placed, upon the tomb, incense and crowns, and said : « We present to the ashes of Marcus Aurelius the homage of Asia. »

At last, a man appeared from the banks of the Danube. He wore the dress of a barbarian, and held a club in his hand. His visage, full of scars, was bold and terrible; but his features at this moment, appeared to be softened by grief. He advanced and said :

Romans, our country was poisoned by pestilence; it was said to have run over the world, and that it came from the frontiers of Parthia to us. Death was in our houses : it pursued us in our forests : we could no longer hunt nor fight : every thing perished : I myself experienced this terrible scourge, and I could no longer support the weight of my arms. In this desolation, we invoked Marcus Aurelius : Marcus Aurelius was our protector and preserver. — He approached, laid his club upon the tomb, and said : « I present to thy ashes the homage of twenty nations which thou hast saved. »

You hear, Romans, replied Apollonius, that his cares extended to all parts of the world. In the space of twenty years the earth experienced all manner of scourges : but nature had given to the earth, as her solace, Marcus Aurelius.

And this great man had enemies! Is it then necessary, — is it a decree of the Eternal, that virtue never can disarm hatred? Romans,

your best Emperors have seen the poignards whetted against them. Nerva saw himself attacked in his palace : they conspired against Titus : Antoninus and Trajan were obliged to pardon conspirators, and Marcus Aurelius, yes, Marcus Aurelius has struggled for his life ! Already you think of the revolt of Cassius, of that proud and audacious man, austere, furious, voluptuous, and passionate ; willing sometimes to be Cataline, sometimes Cato ; excessive in his virtues and in his vices ; a barbarian who, in rebelling, pronounced the words virtue and country, and spoke of abuses, reformation, and morals : for in all times, the public good has served as a pretext for crimes ; and, in oppressing individuals, we have heard of the happiness of the state.

I would here wish to present to your view the annals of those times in which tyrants discovered a conspiracy, or triumphed over revolt. You recollect it well : proscription was a right, reasons of state justified murder : no citizen was innocent when he knew a person to be guilty : the finest sentiments of nature passed as a crime : the tear which stole from the eye of friendship was punished as a crime ; and the mother dragged to punish-

ment who wept the death of her son. We must from time to time recollect these horrors, that princes, by the excess of their vengeance, may learn to dread the excess of their power. Let us see in the mean time, what was the conduct of Marcus Aurelius : they bring him the head of a usurper who perished by the hands of his accomplices : he turns away his eyes, and orders that these remains might be decently inhumed. Subduer of insurrections, he saves the lives of those who wished to take from him the empire : what do I say ? he becomes their protector. The senate proposes to avenge its prince : he implores from the senate the pardon of his enemies. « I pray you in the name of the gods, not to shed blood ; let the exiles return : let the goods be rendered to those who have been plundered, and would to heaven, added he, that I could open the tombs ! » Be not then astonished, Romans, if the family even of Cassius, which in other times, expected nothing but proscription and death, have recovered all the splendor of their ancient fortune. Turn your eyes to that side.

The people looked ; they saw at the gate of the palace, a woman of noble figure, and whose beauty was not

yet effaced by age. She was near a porfico, a little raised above the crowd, and her head half covered with a veil; around her were seen children of different ages: it was the wife and the children of Cassius. Too far from the crowd, they could not hear what the philosopher said, but they looked at this grand spectacle. Sometimes the mother fixed her tender eyes upon the children: then all of a sudden, stretching her arms to the tomb, she appeared to thank Marcus Aurelius for the preservation of her offspring.

People, cried Apollonius, behold the witnesses of his clemency. After having reduced Rome to peace, he marches to Asia to strengthen the shaken provinces: he shews himself every where the beneficent master, the philosophic prince, whose empire some guilty towns had dared to despise. They present him the papers of rebels; he burns them without knowing their contents: I wish not, said he, to be forced to hate. All threw themselves at his feet: he pardons towns and provinces: kings of the east come to render him homage: he maintains or reestablishes peace, and universal admiration attends the philosopher so worthy of the throne. Again, after eight years, he reappears on the banks of the Tiber: with what transport was he received! never had so many virtues together appeared in Rome:

to the knowledge of Adrian, he united the mind of Titus : he had governed like Augustus, fought like Trajan, and pardoned like Antoninus. The people were happy : the senate was great : even his enemies adored him : foreign wars terminated in victory ; civil war in clemency : from the Danube to the Euphrates, and from the Nile to Britannia ⁽¹⁾, troubles had ceased, and all was calm : Europe and Africa reposed in peace : then he, a second time, triumphed. Men of all nations, and the ambassadors of all kings increased this splendor : the blood of victims flowed in the temple : incense smoked on the altars : the people with cries, surrounded the statues, and adorned them with flowers : all resounded with acclamations : and he in the midst of this splendor, in the march of triumph, tranquil and without ostentation, enjoyed in silence the felicity of Rome, and of the empire ; and from the height of his Capitol, appeared to cast a serene eye over the universe. Who of you, Romans, did not then wish that this great man might be immortal ;

(1) In the original it is Great Britain. The author was evidently guilty of an anachronism, as that country was then not known by this name. T.

or, at least, that the gods might grant him many and happy years? What! are benevolent men so rare, and shall the earth enjoy them for so short a time? Alas! evils surround and attack us; and when a prince springs up, whose only care is to soften them; when the human race, withered by misfortune, is revived, and begins again to be happy, the prop which supported it is taken away, and with one man perishes the felicity of an age! Marcus Aurelius remained yet two years among us, when the eternal enemies of the empire recalled him, the third time, to the extremity of Germany: then in spite of declining health, he returned to the banks of the Danube. It was in the midst of those labors we lost him. His last moments (as I was present, I can render you an account of them) were those of a great man and a sage. The sickness with which he was attacked, did not trouble him: accustomed during fifty years, to meditate on nature, he had learned to know her, and was taught submission to her laws. I recollect well that one day he said to me: « Apollonius, every thing changes around me: the world to day is not that of yesterday, and that of to morrow will not be what we have to day. Amongst all these motions can

I alone remain fixed? The torrent must also drag me along : every thing warns me that one day I shall cease to exist. The ground on which I tread, has been trodden by thousands of men who have disappeared : the annals of empires, the ruins of towns, urns and statues, what are all these, but images of what is no more? That sun which thou seest, shines only upon tombs. » — Thus the philosophic prince exercised, and fortified his mind : when his last moments approached, he was not astonished : I felt myself elevated by his discourse. Romans, this great man, when dying, had something inexpressibly imposing and august : it appeared that in proportion as he was detached from the earth, he took something of the divine and unknown nature with which he was soon to be associated. I could not touch his dying hands without respect ; and the mournful bed, on which he waited death, appeared a kind of sanctuary. In the meantime, the army was in consternation ; the soldier wept in his tent : nature herself appeared in mourning : the sky of Germany was obscured ; a tempest agitated the top of the forest which environed the camp ; and these mournful objects appeared to augment

our desolation. He wished to be left alone, either to review his life, in presence of the Supreme Being, or to have another, and last meditation : at length he called us to him : all the friends of this great man and the generals of the army came and ranged themselves around him : he was pale : his eyes half shut, his lips almost cold : still however we could remark a tender concern upon his visage. Prince ! he appeared to be reanimated a moment for thee : his dying hand presented thee to all the old men who had served under him : he recommended to them thy youth. « Be to him a father, said he : be to him a father. » He then gave thee advice, such as Marcus Aurelius, dying, ought to give to his son : and soon after, he was lost to Rome and to the world.

At these words, all the Roman people remained sad and immoveable. Apollonius was silent : his tears flowed. He sunk on the body of Marcus Aurelius : he grasped him a long time in his arms, and suddenly raising himself, he said :

But thou who art to succeed this great man ; Son of Marcus Aurelius ! My son [allow an old man who saw thee born, and who once held thee an infant in his arms, to use his expres-

sion] think on the charge which the gods have imposed upon thee;—think of the rights of those who obey. Destined to reign, thou must be either the most just, or the most guilty of men : can the son of Marcus Aurelius hesitate on the choice? Thou wilt soon be told, thou art all-powerful : they will deceive thee : the bounds of thy authority are marked by the law. They will also say to thee, that thou art great and adored by thy people. Hear : when Nero had poisoned his brother, he was told that he had saved Rome : when he had butchered his wife, they praised his justice : when he had assassinated his mother, they kissed his parricidal hand, and ran to the temples to give thanks to the gods. Suffer not thyself to be dazzled by respect : if thou hast not virtues, they will at once render thee homage and hate thee. Believe me, the people will not be abused : insulted justice watches in all hearts : master of the world, thou mayest order my death, but thou canst not force me to love thee. O son of Marcus Aurelius! pardon : I speak in the name of the gods; in the name of the universe which is confided to thee : I speak for thine, and for the happiness of men. No : thou wilt not be insensible to a glory so pure. I

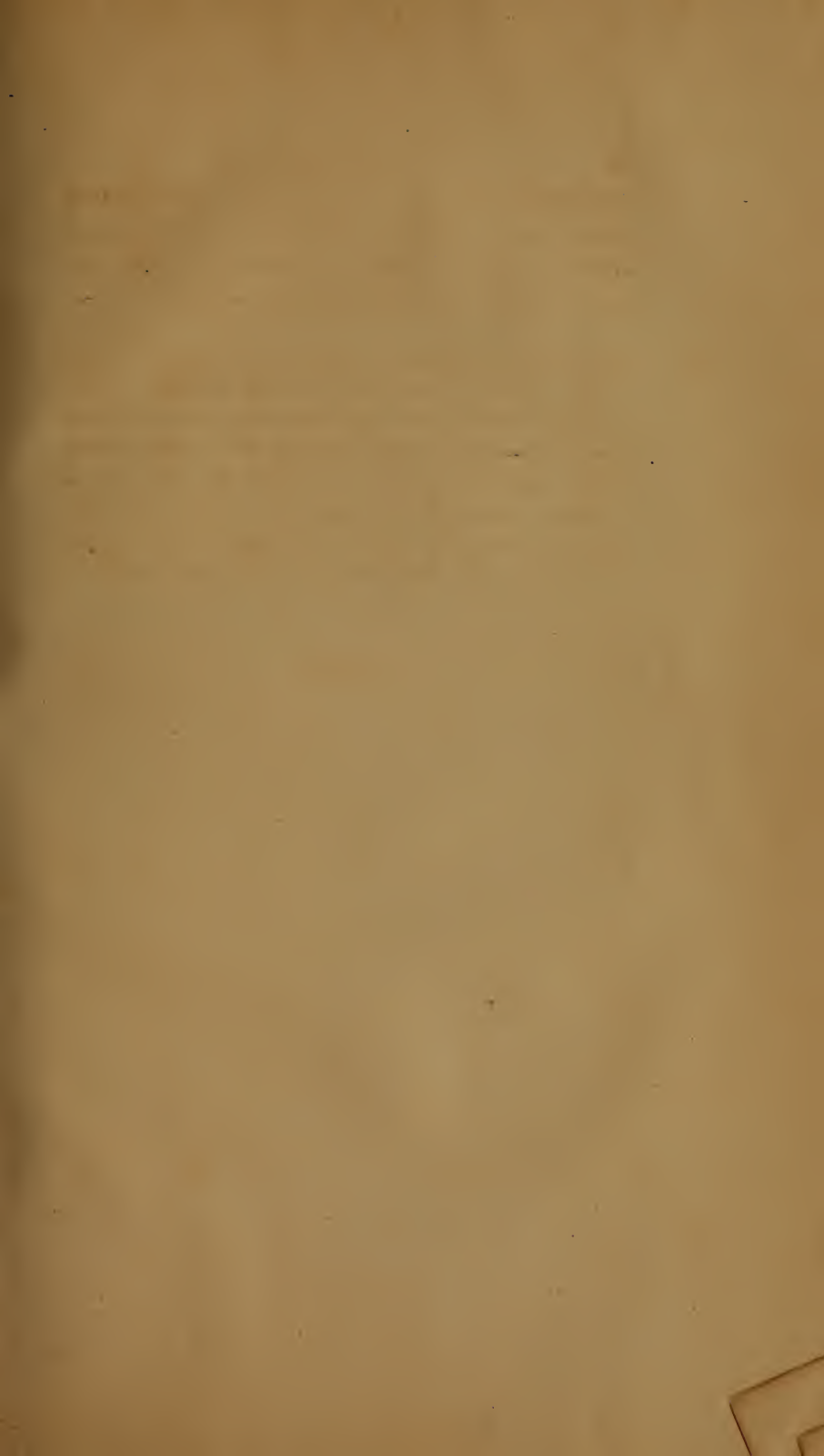
approach the end of my days : soon^t shall go to join thy father. If thou art just, may I still live long enough to contemplate thy virtues ! But if one day thou shouldst —

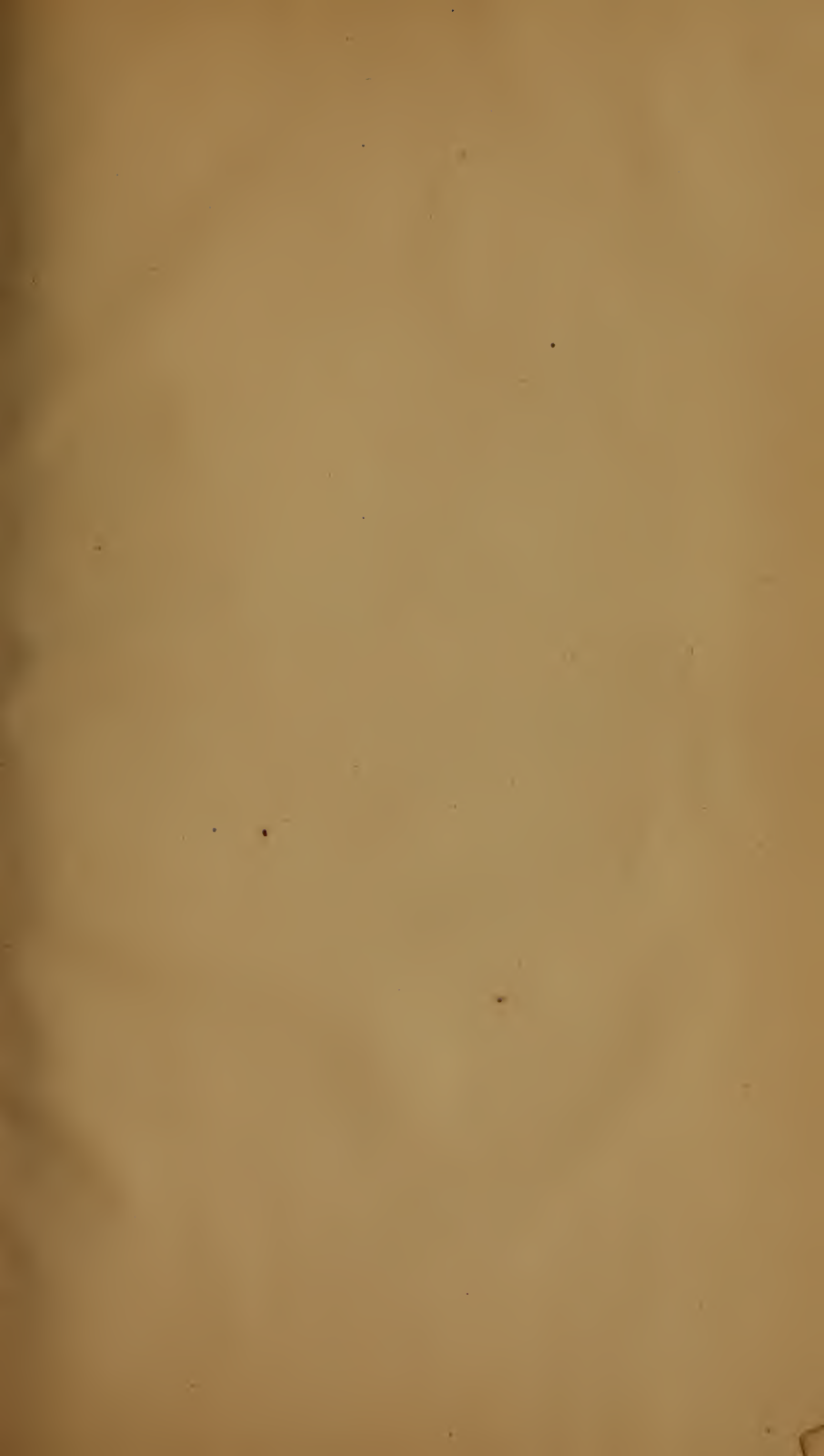
On a sudden Commodus, who wore the dress of a warrior, shook his spear in a terrible manner. All the Romans grew pale : Apollonius was struck with the misfortunes which menaced Rome. He could not finish. The venerable old man covered his face. The funeral pomp, which had been suspended, was resumed. The people followed in consternation and profound silence. They then felt that Marcus Aurelius was *indeed no more*.

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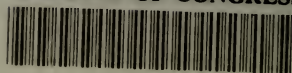
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